

# What black belt means to me

[Education](#), [Learning](#)



What Black Belt Means to Me My name is Mark, I am fourteen years old and I received my Junior Black Belt in November 2008. Since receiving my Black Belt there have been many changes in my life. In November 2009 my mom and I moved to Jobstown, New Jersey. This is about thirty minutes away from the Medford Amerikick studio. Before we moved I lived ten minutes away; near all the close family I grew up with since I was a baby. Since I moved to a new town I had to change school districts, I now attend eighth grade at Northern Burlington Middle School. The fact that I stayed committed to taking karate during this time shows my dedication to learning new skills to attain my Senior Black Belt. What I have learned since getting my Junior Black Belt is that it takes energy, dedication and practice to be successful at karate. Energy because after a long day at school a lot of times I just don't feel like driving the thirty minutes to class taking an hour and a half class and then driving home thirty minutes. It's been especially difficult this winter because of all the snowstorms. It takes dedication as a Black Belt Demo team member to attend the performances at stripe testing and tournaments all year. And practice time needed to perfect new moves and demos introduced can be challenging with all my other commitments in school. In school I have maintained all A's and one B throughout the school year so far. As I am in eighth grade my class work has been more intense than when I was a red belt and a new Junior Black belt. I have more class projects and reports that require my time on weeknights and weekends to complete. But I feel karate helps me to focus and it also helps me to prioritize my time so that I can accomplish both goals of being a successful student in school and in karate. Over the past year and a half several of my other team members

that earned their Junior Black Belt with me have dropped out of class. For various reasons such as participation in other sports, a need to get a job or just a lack of desire to continue in karate. Sometimes I think about quitting but I enjoy my classes once I get there and I love learning new techniques. I also would like to learn how to teach the younger children at my school and show them how commitment and hard work pays off in earning your next stripe or next belt. The most important thing I learned since getting my Amerikick Junior Black Belt is to persevere. When things are difficult to learn or when you make a mistake or drop your kamas during a performance you still just keep going. Keeping a positive attitude is important. Many times when I didn't want to go to class and I went anyway it turned out to be a fun class and I was glad I went!